



Learn and Serve America Higher Education Program

Learn and Serve America (LSA) provides grants to schools, colleges, and nonprofits to support programs that enrich learning through community service. This approach to education, called service-learning, addresses community needs while developing students' academic skills and the habits of responsible citizenship. In fiscal year 2001, LSA supported 62 higher education projects that provided funds to 250 campuses and involved approximately 80,000 students, faculty, staff, and community members.

Overview

LSA's Higher Education Program awards funds through a national competitive grant process to individual colleges and universities, as well as to a consortia of higher education institutions that may also include nonprofit organizations and public agencies.

LSA programs typically create and strengthen programs and courses that integrate community service with academic study. Grants support partnerships between higher education institutions and local schools and community organizations to address compelling community needs. Higher education institutions may also conduct research and evaluation, provide technical assistance, and supplement Federal Work-Study programs to support community service and service-learning. All LSA grants are for a period of three years, renewable annually contingent upon performance. Grants to institutions of higher education must be matched dollar for dollar in cash or in donated goods and services.

Program Examples

An LSA grant to an individual campus, for example, could allow a college to develop additional service-learning courses and programs while improving the educational and economic opportunities for residents

of the surrounding community. LSA funds, for instance, could be used to create service-learning courses that send students into local schools to tutor and mentor elementary students, create service leadership programs, and provide curricular support to teachers. Faculty support could be provided through seminars and other professional development opportunities.

As an example of a grant to a consortium, a higher education association could receive funds to create high-quality, sustainable service-learning programs among its members. Those who are relative newcomers to service-learning could receive subgrants to develop new service-learning courses, conduct community needs assessments, support college-community collaborative activities, and create college-wide service-learning programs. Subgrants could also be awarded to faculty or administrators with service-learning experience, each of whom would mentor faculty or staff at other institutions. In addition, the association could use funds to operate a service-learning information clearinghouse offering pertinent resources, provide training and technical assistance to faculty and administrators, convene meetings, conduct evaluations, and ensure that service-learning is highlighted in association publications and conferences.

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FACT SHEET

President's Student Service Awards

The President's Student Service Awards recognize outstanding service to the community by students. Gold Awards are given to students of any age who serve at least 100 hours within a 12-month period. Schools, colleges, or community organizations must certify students' service. Those certified receive a pin and a certificate signed by the President. For more information on the awards, call 866-550-PSSA (7772) or visit www.student-service-awards.org.

Other Resources

LSA provides a variety of resources to any school, higher education institution, or community organization interested in creating or improving service-learning programs. The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse hosts a library of materials, publications, and links on service-learning that can assist everyone from the beginner to the experienced practitioner. For more information, call 866-245-SERV (7378) or visit www.servicelearning.org. The National Service-Learning Exchange is a peer network that provides practitioners with one-to-one support to strengthen service-learning programs. For more information, call 877-572-3924 or visit www.nslexchange.org.

Budget

LSA's enacted budget for fiscal year 2002 is \$43 million. Higher education programs, by law, receive 25 percent of that appropriation, or \$10.75 million.

LSA Network

Learn and Serve America also includes School- and Community-Based programs, which provide grants to state education agencies and community organizations to support service-learning activities for students ages 5 to 17. In fiscal year 2001, these grants supported 2,500 service-learning programs that engaged approximately 1.5 million students nationwide. LSA is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that also oversees AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. Together, these programs engage more than 2 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service each year.

More Information

For more information about LSA programs or to find out more about service-learning, call 202-606-5000, ext.117 or visit www.learnandserve.org.

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